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**Some Roads to Rome in America.** Compiled and edited by Georgina Pell Curtis. St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder. Second Edition, 1910. Pp. xi + 532. \$1.75.

**Beyond the Road to Rome.** By the same Editor. St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder. 1914. Pp. 440. \$1.75.

In these two volumes Miss Curtis has compiled one hundred and ten accounts of prominent men and women who describe the mental and spiritual struggle, which led them to accept the teaching of the Catholic Church and submit to its authority, and who give expression to their experiences within its fold. The compilation is both interesting and instructive, presenting, as it does, the difficulties of those persons who have been brought up in the various sects of Christianity, in Judaism and in unbelief, and showing the religious problem in America and its numerous aspects by exhibiting the mental attitude towards religion in general and Catholicism in particular of people in various surroundings and walks in life.

It is to be remarked, however, that almost without exception, the contributions are given by persons belonging to the more intellectual and cultured classes. To draw, therefore, from these accounts some general conclusions regarding the causes of conversion to the Catholic Faith peculiar to Americans might be misleading indeed, unless such conclusions be referred rather exclusively to the classes of people mentioned. For it is necessary to the intellectually developed and cultured man and woman that channels of appeal should open themselves which are closed to an individual of more mediocre intellectual standards. Yet, some conclusions referring to character, rather than to mental ability, might be extended to concern the American people as a whole.

It will be seen, then, from an analysis of Miss Curtis' two works, that it is a most difficult task to determine precisely what is peculiar to the American in this regard. Blood is thicker than water, and even those Americans, who can claim descent from the earliest settlers of this continent, still retain characteristics peculiar to the various races of their origin. But with these particular characteristics retained in a higher or lower degree, the native-born American has acquired a goodly portion of an idealism which is happily coupled with a love of the practical and with the speculative side rather undeveloped. This constitution of mind invariably drives him to search, at least in serious matters, after the ideal; and the ideal once having been found, to reduce it to practice. It cannot be denied that this idealism at times is so strong that it overrules the practical. With it follows a good deal of optimism; an optimism which gives vigor and urges the individual to

an energetic pursuit of his aims without too much hesitation before obstacles. On the other hand, the American is lacking in keenly critical sense—a result, no doubt, of his above-named characteristics.

That such a constitution of character should play an important rôle in questions religious in America is a matter beyond dispute. The human heart by nature tends to the supernatural, to some relation with God, and to Religion; and in an idealistic mind, the yearning for the supernatural is necessarily strong and pronounced. For this reason, in the American people, at least among the classes of higher intellectual development and training, wherever intellectual pride and self-idolatry have not placed an obstacle, there will be found a strong interest in religious matters. In general, it seems safe to say that this yearning is easily satisfied, for optimism paired with insufficient critical acumen finds its ideal with comparative ease, and, if the ideal does not stand the test of time, it turns with equal ease to another. The result of such a condition, of course, is religious unrest coupled with a proneness to accept whatever is “new” for the day in the field of Religion.

Thus far the American mind is open to religious inquiry. And, needless to say, this is a prerequisite for conversion to the Faith. On the other hand, this highly idealistic but less critical mind is easily prejudiced. It necessarily experiences a keen aversion for whatever would seem to be opposed to the ideal and particularly to its ideals, and it easily accepts as facts whatsoever is presented by apparent authorities. Here let us add that the democratic American is exceedingly fond of tradition. In this respect he is a hopeless aristocrat. It has been easy for the opponents of the Church to portray her in unfavorable colors and thus to create against her a dislike and a distrust which, coupled with traditionally inherited Protestant misconceptions, have come to form an almost national prejudice against the Catholic Church. The most unreasonable prejudices are to be found among those brought up in the various Calvinist and Lutheran sects; whereas the prejudices found especially among High Anglicans and Unitarians are far less vigorous and are not opposed to good common sense. The tenacity of such prejudices is best shown in the account of a convert of long experience in the Church and in the Priesthood, who still holds that the majority of names in the Catholic Directory are “foreign,” because they are not English.

It is striking that with so many converts-to-be the lack of authority within Protestantism should be the cause of their first step towards Rome. Here, certainly, the practical side of the American mind is at work. Salvation is a serious business, and certitude in matters pertaining to salvation is of vital importance. But where authority is

lacking, this certainty cannot be reached; hence the troubled soul goes in quest of authority, and although the road often leads through Anglicanism, real authority can be found only in the Catholic Church. Again, as these pages of Miss Curtis' volumes show, this very lack of authority in Protestantism is the cause of the rapid changes of dogmatic position within its various sects; and this fact, in its turn, has caused doubts as to whether a system allowing so momentous changes could be a true system of revealed Religion. Transferred into human government, as some reason, the Protestant system certainly would amount to nothing but anarchy. In many cases, as the writers in these volumes confess, the lack of an historical basis of Protestantism is a leading cause of conversion. The search for historic Christianity easily leads to the acceptance of the higher forms of Anglicanism, but the step from Ritualism to Catholicism invariably offers more serious difficulties. The Branch Theory seems very plausible to the inquirer, and on this point a certain lack of critical acumen of the American mind makes itself manifest.

Among the many things in Catholicism which exert a drawing towards the Catholic religion in the United States, the attractiveness and beauty of Catholic worship seems to be among the more general. The liturgy of the Church, as shown in correctly performed functions, invariably deeply impresses the spectator even though he may not have a complete grasp of its meaning. Well-performed ceremonies and the Gregorian chant cannot but make a strong appeal to a mind with a sense for beauty. Gothic architecture and good art in vestments and decorations intensifies this effect on the cultured American mind.

It is needless to add that the example of Catholics has led many on their road to Rome. And it is interesting to note the many cases in which the Irish servant-maid has been instrumental in giving this example; truly, her apostolic work in this country is worthy of consideration. The strong influence of the Blessed Sacrament on those who may have fully ignored Its presence is another cause of conversion. A large number of accounts record the attractiveness of the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; and the Real Presence in the Tabernacle is mentioned frequently as a reason for the change of heart. Catholic literature, of course, can claim its large share in the work of bringing about conversions. The works of Cardinals Newman and Gibbons, of Brownson, Faber and Maturin, Moehler's "Symbolism," Hecker's "Questions of the Soul," Lammenais' "Essai sur l'Indifference," the "Imitation of Christ," and the "Spiritual Exercises" of St. Ignatius Loyola, are all mentioned as having been greatly helpful to the various inquirers. Others have been benefitted by the reading of St. Augustine

and of Eusebius and other sources of Church History through which they have come to a realization of the truth of the claims of the Catholic Church. Again, private reading of the Bible, especially of St. Paul and of the texts referring to the Primacy of St. Peter, to the Office of the Holy Ghost and to the Real Presence, has brought the truth forcefully to many minds.

Finally, there might be mentioned among the causes of conversion the religious devotions in the Anglican Church. In many cases, also, calumny against the Church and the priesthood have had a reactionary effect. The Know-Nothing movement was regarded with contempt by many intelligent Protestants, and the fact that Protestants not infrequently argued their cause by attacking Catholicism while Catholics explained dogmas, and refuted slander but did not attack their opponents, has contributed to open the eyes of many fair-minded inquirers.

Miss Curtis' two books ought to recommend themselves to Catholics and non-Catholics alike, offering as they do much material for meditation and reflection. Certainly they will be most welcome and valuable to the clergy interested and concerned in the work of bringing stray sheep into the true fold.

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**A History of Indiana from its Exploration to 1850.** By Logan Esarey, Ph. D. Indianapolis: L. K. Stewart Co., 1915. Pp. 515.

Few persons in Indiana are better equipped to write a history of Indiana than Dr. Logan Esarey, Instructor in Western History in Indiana University, and editor-in-chief of the *Indiana Magazine of History*. In this State, as in so many others of the Union, the materials for history are only now being gathered together. We can therefore appreciate the labors necessary to write a historical narrative like this, critically correct. In his work, Dr. Esarey has succeeded admirably well in spite of the fact that serious obstacles presented themselves at every turn. From the first page of the book to the last, the interest of the reader is sustained. The opening chapter, dealing with the activities of the French in Indiana, presents many revelations to the student of history. In his researches on this early period Dr. Esarey depended to a large extent upon facts drawn from the *Jesuit Relations*, and he has interpreted and marshalled his data in a convincing and scholarly manner. When we write about Clark's conquest and Pierre Gibault's part in the winning of the West, he tells the story very succinctly, perhaps too much so. In justice to the patriot-priest, he should have given him most of the credit. John Law, in his Address on *Vincennes*, says, "Next